

# JeffVanderLou Neighborhood Plan

Submitted by the  
Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative, Inc.  
March 7, 2001

## **JeffVanderLou Neighborhood Plan**

### **Introduction**

The JeffVanderLou Neighborhood Plan is the result of a comprehensive, grass roots planning process. Over ten months from November 1999 to August 2000, more than 500 people who care about the future of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood worked together to create a plan for renewal. Residents, owners and employees of local businesses, clergy and church members, landlords, city and state officials, young and old, homeowners and tenants, attended more than two dozen meetings, workshops and field trips during the planning period. A neighborhood non-profit organization has been formed to implement the strategies and plans created by the residents of JeffVanderLou. The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative will oversee and facilitate the comprehensive neighborhood planning and development strategies described in this plan.

The boundaries of the planning area fall within the JeffVanderLou neighborhood, with the new Vashon High School (currently under construction) in the heart of the planning area. The boundaries of the planning area are Delmar Boulevard and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to the south, Compton/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive up to Grand Avenue, Grand north to Cass, west to Prairie, north to St. Louis Avenue, east to Grand, north to Sullivan, east to Glasgow, and south along Elliott and Leffingwell, to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

The Plan provides a blueprint for the physical, economic, and social revitalization of the neighborhood. Residents worked in subcommittees covering four areas of concern: Housing and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Health and Human Services, and Education. This comprehensive approach to the life of the neighborhood is key. Working to improve only one aspect of a neighborhood cannot lead to lasting, positive change. The neighborhood's goal is to bring sustained improvement to the lives of the individuals and families who live, work and worship in JeffVanderLou by working in partnership with residents, business, and government to stimulate physical, economic and social revitalization.

The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative grew from the opportunity and momentum created by the decision to construct a new Vashon High School in the neighborhood. Vashon alumni and the neighborhood's alderman, Michael McMillan, worked for several years to rally support and interest among Vashon graduates, the City of St. Louis, and the State of Missouri around a vision of a new Vashon High School. The Danforth Foundation, with its mission to promote and support education at all levels, took a first step in its recent commitment to community development and to return the focus of its grant-making activity solely to St. Louis. The Danforth Foundation committed \$5 million over five years for the creation of the Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative.

The planning process was supported by a team of experts in design, economic development, human services, and education. A complete list of consultant team members and their roles is attached. The planning subcommittees were also assisted by volunteer members of the local community with expertise in each planning area. Their names and affiliations are attached.

### **Organization of the Neighborhood Plan**

The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative is a unique process in St. Louis, in its level of neighborhood participation and comprehensive approach. The work of the past year resulted in three separate primary documents. Two of the primary documents have a design focus and one contains the

history, goals, and strategies of the neighborhood. The three documents are the Existing Conditions Report, Design Team Report, and Plan for Action. They are presented in this submission in their entirety in order to provide the reader with the complete scope of the project, from plan to implementation strategy. Nearly all of the information required for a neighborhood plan submission is included in these three documents. We have supplemented the material with required items that were not part of the original planning process. The Table of Contents shows the reader where to look for each required item.

In order to provide the City with one complete document following the order of the required neighborhood plan outline, the Initiative will, upon completion of the public hearing process, combine the various sources of information into one bound document, with chapters following the outline. This final plan document will also be made available in electronic format.



## **JeffVanderLou Neighborhood Plan – SubCommittee Leaders and Technical Consultants**

### ***Subcommittee Chairs (Volunteer)***

Education: Marlene Davis, St. Louis Board of Education

Housing and Infrastructure: Chris Krehmeyer, Beyond Housing, Inc.

Health and Human Services: Frederick Robinson, National Benevolent Association

Economic Development: Byron Winton, Civic Ventures

### ***Subcommittee Vice Chairs (Volunteer)***

Health and Human Services: Judy Bentley, CHIPS

Economic Development: Yvonne Sparks Strauther, Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative

### ***Public Engagement Consultants***

A to Z Initiatives, LLC

### ***Technical Consultants***

Education: Lisa Angstreich, George Myers - McCormack Baron & Associates

Housing & Infrastructure: Robert Freedman, Ray Gindroz – Urban Design Associates, Michael Willis – Michael Willis Architects

Health and Human Services: Bryan Samuels, Grassroots Planning and Consulting

Economic Development: Maxine Mitchell, Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc.

Historic Preservation: Everett Fly, E.L. Fly Associates, Inc.

### ***Design Consultants to SubCommittees***

Education: David Mason, David Mason & Associates

Housing & Infrastructure: Marietta Burton, David Mason & Associates

Health and Human Services: Mike Killeen, David Mason & Associates

Economic Development: Annette Coleman, David Mason & Associates

For a complete list of subcommittee members, please refer to pages 42-43 of the Plan for Action.

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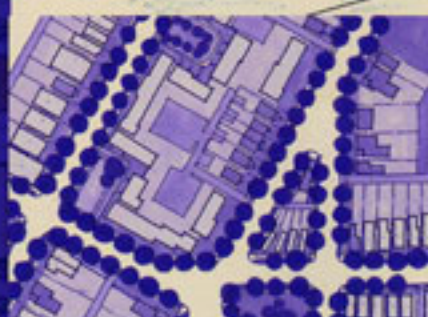
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# The Vashon/ Jeff VanderLou Initiative

*Subcommittee  
Report:  
Plan for Action*





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The JeffVanderLou neighborhood has a long and rich history as a center of African-American education, culture, entertainment, and athletics. Designated the "Negro District" of St. Louis in the 1800s, JeffVanderLou was one of few areas in the city where African-Americans were permitted to own real estate. The original Vashon High School opened its doors in 1927 at what is now the site of Harris-Stowe State College on Garrison, just south of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood, and later moved to the corner of Bell Avenue and Grand Avenue. The new Vashon High School is being constructed in the heart of the neighborhood, providing the impetus for a revival of the surrounding area. It is the only public high school in St. Louis named for an African-American.

In the mid-1900s, the neighborhood supported a bustling business district along what was then Easton Avenue (now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), including Frye's drugstore, and numerous shops, theaters, and nightclubs.

During its heyday, JeffVanderLou was home to many famous African-Americans - Scott Joplin, Negro Baseball League superstar James "Cool Papa" Bell, and many other achievers in arts, sports, and professional life.

In the post-WWII years, the neighborhood



suffered from the effects of population loss, disinvestment, and job loss as residents and businesses moved out of the inner city in the wake of urban renewal.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, a group of dedicated community activists, led by Maclear Shepard, organized the neighborhood in an effort to halt the population decline and restore a sense of community and economic vitality to JeffVanderLou. Shepard, a visionary pioneer of St. Louis urban redevelopment, and his partners built or rehabilitated over 500 units of housing throughout the neighborhood. These properties are referred to today as "JVL Housing." The group also built a senior housing development, created and delivered daycare and other social services, youth and business development programs.

Today, the JVL Housing units are undergoing another round of rehabilitation combined with family support services.

Maclear Shepard and others of the original JeffVanderLou development family have participated in and made substantial contributions this planning process.

## PROFILE

Project Area: 452 acres  
Population: 6,538  
Housing Units: 2,327

Boundaries: Delmar / Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. /  
Jefferson / St. Louis Avenue / Prairie





## introduction

This report is the result of a year of work by the people of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood to create a plan for its revitalization. It reflects their vision and the strategies they created to guide the work of the Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative, a nonprofit organization created to facilitate comprehensive neighborhood planning and development.

Though no one effort can address everything at once for all people in a community, the plan does touch many aspects of neighborhood life in JeffVanderLou.

The plan is community-based. It is based on excellent technical advice, the history and experience of those who live and work in this neighborhood and lessons learned from other community development efforts.

## initiative background

### How It Began

The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative grew from the opportunity and momentum created by the decision to construct a new Vashon High School in the neighborhood. Vashon alumni and the neighborhood's alderman worked for several years to rally support and interest among Vashon graduates, students and parents, the City of St. Louis and the State of Missouri around a vision of a new Vashon High School.

Because of that effort, the City of St. Louis embraced an opportunity to leverage the school system's investment by contributing \$200,000 in City resources and a site for the new school. The alderman saw an opportunity to stimulate further investment in the neighborhood and committed \$800,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to improve infrastructure around the new school. The Danforth Foundation, with its mission to promote and support education

### Vashon / JeffVanderLou Initiative Investments to Date

SLPS Bond Issue.....	\$30 million
Danforth Foundation.....	\$5 million
City of St. Louis.....	\$2.2 million
Alderman McMillan.....	\$800,000
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## **the vashon/jeffvanderlou initiative executive summary**

The Danforth Foundation's grant commitment of \$5 million over five years is dedicated to the creation of a nonprofit organization to act as a community development facilitator and intermediary. As such, the organization, its board of directors and staff is charged with the task of working with the residents of JeffVanderLou to create a vision for a renewed neighborhood and begin to turn that vision into action and reality. To accomplish that goal, the intermediary organization's role is to:

- 1) Secure and provide professional technical assistance, staff support and resources to the community for a resident-led planning process;*
- 2) Begin early, resident-focused activities;*
- 3) Use its resources to build resident and local organization capacity so that the neighborhood's people and institutions may play primary roles in implementation; and*
- 4) Provide seed capital to leverage the financial and human resources needed to ensure the success of the Initiative.*

### **Guiding Principles**

Working to improve only one aspect of a neighborhood cannot lead to lasting, positive change. The goal is to bring sustained improvement to the lives of the individuals and families who live, work and worship in JeffVanderLou by working in partnership with residents, business and government to stimulate physical, economic and social revitalization. To that end, the following principles guide the Initiative's efforts:

- Rely on the process to create a set of actions that will begin immediately upon resident adoption of the plan.
- Respect the history, views and abilities of residents, and look to them to create the vision and plan of action.
- Build on existing assets and seek to work in partnership with residents, existing neighborhood organizations and service providers.
- Respond to community needs in direct and meaningful ways.
- Build and mobilize broad, sustained community participation and organizational leadership.
- Use resources to attract and leverage other resources.
- Ensure that plans for physical development are of sufficient scale to attract needed financial investment and create significant, highly visible impact in the neighborhood.

These principles guided JeffVanderLou residents and the Initiative's board and staff through an intense, highly participatory planning process over the past 10 months, and will guide their future activities.

### **Process**

Over the 10 months from November 1999 to August 2000, more than 500 people who care about the future of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood worked together to create a plan for renewal. Residents, employers, owners and employees of local businesses, clergy and church members, landlords, property owners, city and state officials, young and old, homeowners and tenants attended more than two dozen meetings, workshops and field trips during this planning period.



### Strategies to Build Social Capital:

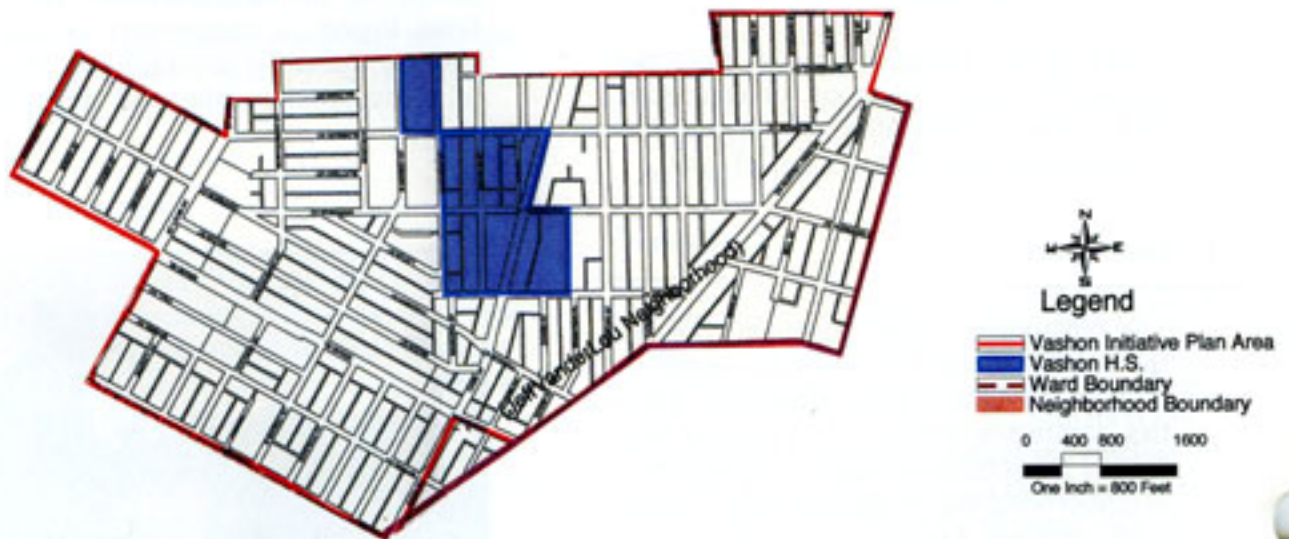
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- Support Neighborhood Businesses
- Invest in Youth
- Promote Excellence in Education
- Expand and Coordinate Health and Human Services

### Strategies to Build Physical Capital:

- Celebrate Our History: The Foundation for Physical and Economic Revitalization
- Create a Community Service and Learning Campus
- Build and Preserve Housing

We acknowledge that the accomplishment of the plan as outlined is dependent upon many factors that must work together. The specific order of actions and accomplishments will be driven by the resources--

financial and human--and opportunities that emerge over time. However, it is important to be specific in order to ensure a focus on action and results.



Vashon/JeffVanderLou Project Area





This report groups strategies into two categories: Social Capital and Physical Capital. Social Capital includes strategies that support our people and our economy. These strategies relate to jobs, health, families, youth and education. Physical Capital includes strategies that build or renovate property, streets, parks and blocks. We recognize the importance of both social and physical development in revitalizing our neighborhood.



Top: Elbert Robinson  
(l - r): Castidel Moore, Ocie Hayes, Inez Upchurch,  
Les Mason, Calvin Jones

## strategies to build social capital

### build neighborhood leadership and organization

With the conclusion of the planning process, we are ready to act on our plans and achieve the goals we adopted. How the Initiative organization is governed and how we are organized to lead, guide and monitor progress are key to our success. In carrying out the goal of creating a neighborhood

organization, we are guided by two essential principles: 1. Build and strengthen resident leadership abilities, to sustain success over the long-term. 2. Create partnerships with existing organizations to get the work done.

The role of the Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative is to create partnerships and gather resources for each of the strategies we have developed. The Initiative typically will not operate programs or develop property. Instead it will work with other neighborhood, city, state and federal agencies, as well as private developers and institutions, to carry out our plans through partnerships.

#### **Building neighborhood leadership and an effective neighborhood organization will:**

1. Provide an organized way for residents to participate in the implementation of the strategies.
2. Encourage representation from all parts of our neighborhood and ensure that each area's needs are addressed.
3. Ensure that all residents are well informed, included in and benefit from new opportunities,
4. Provide a way for the Initiative to continue in the spirit of the resident-led planning process.
5. Provide a partner - a neighborhood organization - that can implement a variety of neighborhood programs.

#### **Our strategy includes:**

- Neighborhood Leadership Development
- Advisory Committees
- Neighborhood Association
- Board of Directors





## **build neighborhood leadership and organization**

The purpose of neighborhood leadership development is to provide residents with the knowledge and tools needed to meet the challenges of implementing the plan. To accomplish this, the CORO Midwestern Center has been engaged by the Initiative to conduct leadership training for residents and others in the community. CORO is a

local organization whose mission is providing leadership training for youth and adults for service to St. Louis organizations, neighborhoods and the community at large. Working with CORO, the Initiative has developed a Neighborhood Leadership Academy that consists of:

**Principles of Effective Neighborhood Leadership:** This is a 12-week class that will provide training and information on issues including negotiating, problem-solving, conflict resolution, project management, group dynamics and the role and responsibilities of the nonprofit organization board of directors. This course will provide the foundation for developing a well organized and effective neighborhood organization.

**Board and Organization Development and Operations:** This segment will build on the 12-week course and will focus on creating a healthy, effective and well-managed nonprofit organization. This monthly workshop series will continue for six months and be open to all JeffVanderLou residents.

**Development 101:** This segment will teach the fundamentals of community development planning, finance and approaches.

### **The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative in Action: Neighborhood Leadership Opportunities**

**JeffVanderLou Leadership Academy:** A comprehensive training program for residents in project management, leadership, negotiation, and conflict resolution; also provides training in principles of board service and nonprofit management for neighborhood based organizations. This will begin in fall 2000.

**JeffVanderLou Safety and Security Task Force:** Residents are organizing a coalition of residents, police officers, businesspeople, clergy, and federal, state and local law enforcement officials to develop short- and long-term solutions to neighborhood crime and to enhance neighborhood safety overall. We will

coordinate this effort with Ceasefire, SafeFutures, and other existing programs. This effort is underway.

**JeffVanderLou Community Builders:** Starting at the end of the planning process in May, the Initiative began to create service and leadership opportunities for residents. Cleaning alleys, assisting elderly residents, joining the Leadership Academy, and assisting elderly and disabled homeowners with applications for free home repairs are some of the ways that residents have taken responsibility for what happens in JeffVanderLou.





## **neighborhood leadership and organization**

### **Advisory Committees**

It is proposed that the subcommittees that created the plan be joined by new members to form Advisory Committees. These Advisory Committees will gain expertise in subject areas, gather residents' input, monitor progress, provide feedback about performance and shape future plans and programs for each area of concern--Housing and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Health and Human Services, Education, and Youth--through the implementation phase. The Advisory Committees will work directly with Initiative staff, the board of directors, consultants and agency partners.

### **Neighborhood Association**

Another primary goal of the Initiative is the development of a neighborhood association in JeffVanderLou. The purpose of the association will be to provide a way for residents to continue to participate in and guide the progress of revitalization. It is intended to be composed primarily of residents, but may also include businesses, the faith community, police, neighborhood agencies and others concerned with the future of JeffVanderLou. This nonprofit group will provide a forum to voice ideas, discuss issues and concerns, and to solve problems. The association may also be able to raise funds and secure other resources to help carry out parts of the plan and meet community needs in partnership with the Initiative and other existing neighborhood groups.

### **Board of Directors**

An organization's board of directors provides for financial, policy and other support and direction for its members and/or staff. Typically, boards of directors of not-for-profit organizations are composed of residents, agency or service client representatives, local leaders and a number of professionals who provide specific skills, abilities and resources (legal, accounting, marketing, and real estate, for example) needed to carry out the board's work in a professional manner. The details of the JeffVanderLou

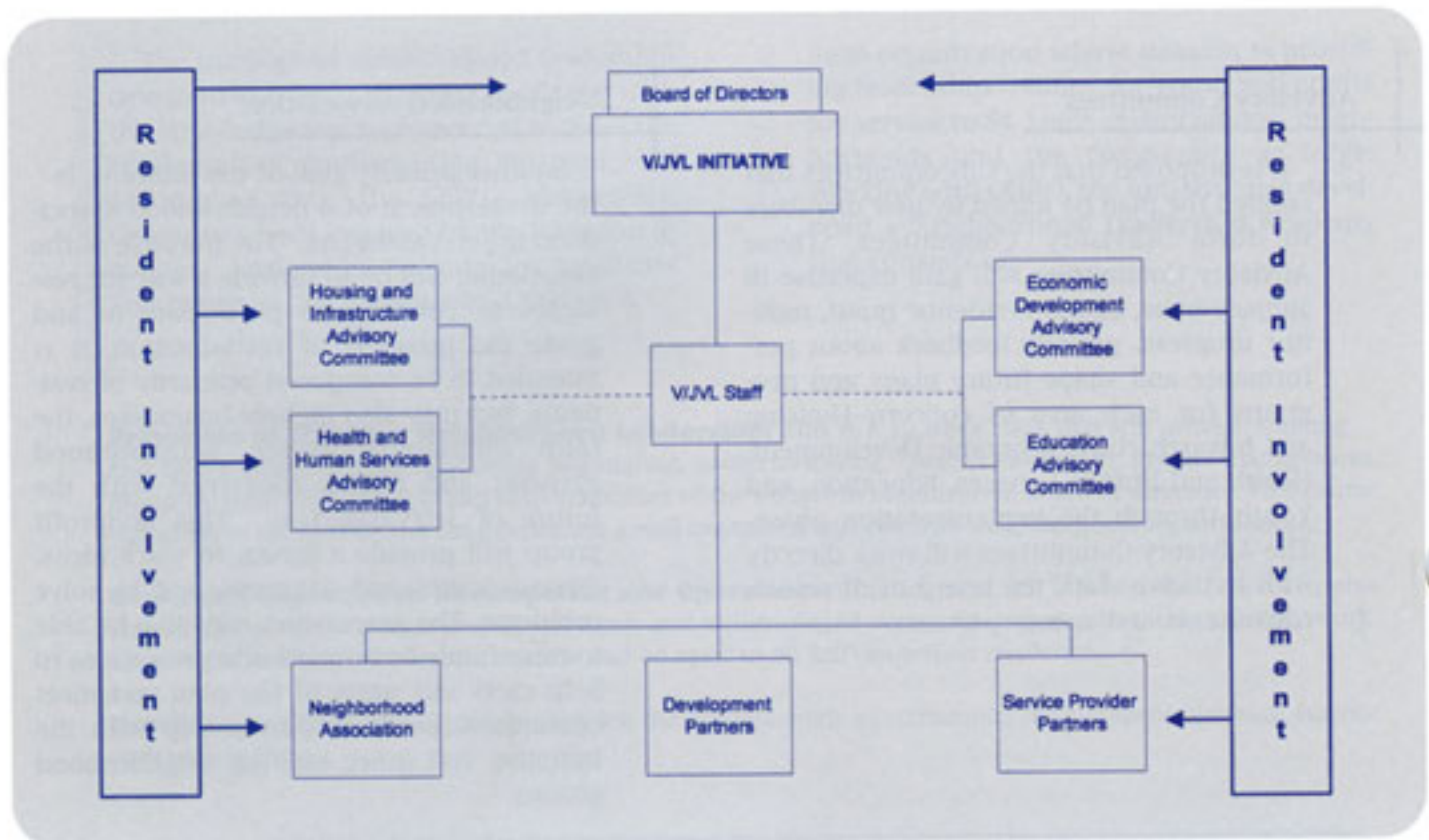
governing model will be worked out in the coming months among the co-chairs, the neighborhood association and staff.

**Successful leadership of the Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative will rely on residents at every level. The graphic on the following page shows resident participation in three areas: Board of Directors, Advisory Committees and Neighborhood Association.**



## strategies and implementation

### neighborhood leadership and organization



Residents meet at Columbia Community School





## **prepare our workforce for 21st century opportunities**

We believe that our residents can and must be prepared to take advantage of job opportunities in the region and in the neighborhood. We must prepare residents by working with them at every level: from basic job readiness and high school equivalency to advanced technical training.

Effective partnerships with the St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis Community College, local employment and training providers, the city and state can assist us in reaching this goal, especially in the area of adult vocational education and job training.

### **Our strategy includes:**

- Individual and family wealth creation.
- Continuing education and adult learning opportunities.
- Vocational education and job training.

### **Individual and Family Wealth Creation**

Many JeffVanderLou residents have not participated in the economic mainstream and lack a basic understanding of money and finance. The Economic Development Subcommittee report states, "[residents] are not equipped to take advantage of opportunities that can improve their individual and family financial situations and futures." We have developed a response to this need: a combination of group classes and individual counseling in financial literacy, home and family economic management, and financial planning and management.

These efforts will begin in Spring 2001.

The next step will be the creation of a partnership with a local financial institution, the state of Missouri and nonprofit organizations to create a savings program that will help residents accumulate the funds necessary to purchase their own assets--automobiles, homes, and education. There are several successful models in St. Louis from which we can create the best plan for JeffVanderLou.

### **Continuing Education and Adult Learning Opportunities**

Committee members identified job readiness and adult basic education as critical needs for many residents. Many youth and adults are not ready to enter the workforce and be successful. The plan will begin with

existing programs and institutions in St. Louis to connect residents with the resources they need to prepare for and start job training in specific trades or skills, or to obtain a job directly. Discussions have



## **prepare our workforce**

begun with the St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis Community College and others to learn what programs are available, which are most effective and how we can provide access to them for our residents. Further, a partnership is under development with the

St. Louis Regional Empowerment Zone and the Missouri Department of Economic Development to create a new, major employment preparation resource in the neighborhood to serve JeffVanderLou residents and others in the region.

### **Vocational Education and Job Training**

For 25 years, a minority artist and entrepreneur named Bill Strickland has operated an extremely successful job-training center in Pittsburgh called the Bidwell Training Center. Strickland also runs a youth arts center, the Manchester Craftsman's Guild, connected to the job training center.

With the overwhelming support of JeffVanderLou residents during a public meeting in July, the Initiative has begun work with the Danforth Foundation to pursue a training and arts center modeled after the Pittsburgh facility for JeffVanderLou and the region. Bill Strickland is personally directing a feasibility study of the JeffVan-

Lou neighborhood for the location of such a center. The decision on the Strickland Center will be made by mid-2001 depending on the ability to secure a suitable location and funding. If implemented, this effort will work closely with the recently announced Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC), the St. Louis Regional Empowerment Zone, the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment and the State of Missouri, as well as industry partners who will provide instructors and jobs. Emphasis will be on job training in those economic sectors identified as potential growth areas, and those with the greatest potential for new job creation.



**Co-chair and 19th Ward  
Alderman, Mike McMillan and  
Dr. Johnnie Mae Franklin Brown**





## prepare our workforce

Details:

Prepare Our Workforce	People at the Table		Immediate, Short, Intermediate, or Long Term Action
<i>Individual and Family Wealth Creation</i>	JVL Residents/Staff	Proposed Partners	
	Staff, Residents	Washington University United Way East-West Gateway CC Beyond Housing Petersen Housing Corp.	
	Design JVL program	Staff	Immediate
	Obtain IDA match	Staff	Short
	Obtain add'l operating funds	Staff	Immediate
<i>Continuing Education and Adult Learning Opportunities</i>	Begin curriculum	Staff	Short
	Staff	St. Louis Public Schools Non-profit agencies St. Louis Public Library St. Louis Community College	
	Determine specific program needs	Staff	Immediate
	Design JVL program	Staff	Immediate
	Develop partnerships	Staff	Short
<i>Vocational Education and Job Training</i>	Begin operation in campus	Staff, Partners	
	Executive Director Bill Strickland Danforth Foundation	City St. Louis Community College Dollar General Store Funders Job training organizations Arts organizations	
	Perform feasibility study for MCG/BTC model	Strickland, Danforth Foundation, Residents	Immediate-Short-Intermediate
Reach conclusion re: MCG/BTC model in JVL	Strickland, Danforth Foundation Partners,		



Economic Development Subcommittee



## **support neighborhood businesses**

Residents are concerned that JeffVanderLou lacks businesses to serve the area and businesses that provide jobs to area residents. Earlier sections of this report have discussed the need for work-force preparation and education to assist residents in obtaining good jobs. But an

environment that supports existing businesses and attracts new enterprises to the neighborhood is also needed. In addition to the revival of businesses and services along Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, we propose the following three components of a business support and development strategy:

### **Our strategy includes:**

- Develop the commercial district along Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and North Grand Avenue with targeted infrastructure and business investment for existing and new businesses.
- Work with industry in the northeast sector of JeffVanderLou on a cohesive, attractive industrial park setting with adequate buffers between business and residential use.
- Create an effective "one-stop shop" for business and development information, licenses and permits, financing and incentives for existing and potential business to support their location and expansion in the neighborhood.



Sentinel Publisher Michael Williams (Center) and other neighborhood business owners view the neighborhood model.





## **support neighborhood businesses**

### **North Grand Avenue Business Development**

A variety of small businesses are located along North Grand Avenue, which at one time was a major commercial corridor with many thriving stores, offices, hotels, restaurants and services. Reviving North Grand Avenue will support existing businesses, create the potential to attract new ones, tie JeffVanderLou to the Grand Center Arts District to the south and improve an important pathway into North St. Louis.

We will work with the North Grand Business Association to determine needs for additional funding and staffing to promote and market the area. In addition, it will be necessary to create business incentives and financing to support existing businesses and attract new ones. Tax credits and a variety of small business funding and financing options will be pursued for Grand Avenue and other area businesses.

Design and streetscape suggestions are included in the Design Team Report that

will provide guidelines for efforts to improve the streets, traffic flow and landscaping on Grand.

Our vision is for Grand Boulevard to be a clean, attractive and thriving commercial thoroughfare from Interstate 44 to Interstate 70.



**Grand at St. Louis Avenue - Before**



**Grand at St. Louis Avenue - After**

### **Create a Safe, Attractive Setting for Industrial and Commercial Businesses**

The JeffVanderLou neighborhood is one of a few on the City's north side with an active industrial area within its borders. Several industrial companies are located in a cluster in the northeast corner. Together, these businesses employ nearly 1,000 people in the production of a number of products ranging from food dyes and newspapers to printing and cabinetry. However, few of their employees are neighborhood residents. The goal of the industrial edge strat-

egy is twofold: to improve the physical relationship between the industries and the neighboring residential areas; and to establish a more cooperative relationship between the neighborhood and the businesses, with the aim of improving employment opportunities in these businesses for our residents.

We will also pursue internships and vocational training opportunities with our indus-





## support neighborhood businesses

strual neighbors. Many of these businesses participated in our planning process and have expressed an interest in an ongoing relationship with the Initiative as a way to improve their relationships with the community.

### "One-Stop Shop" for Business

The "one-stop shop" concept will provide businesses--both existing in the neighborhood and those considering moving into JeffVanderLou--a single place to get answers to key questions, obtain permit and license information, and learn about financial incentives for locating or expanding in the neighborhood. We will work with the City and other commercial areas where similar programs exist.

#### **This strategy meets these goals:**

**Economic Development:** Foster business development and job creation. Promote development of new businesses and entrepreneurs from within the community.

**Health and Human Services:** Reduce unemployment, by increasing access to job training and employment assistance.

**Housing and Infrastructure:** Provide more neighborhood retail - particularly on MLK and Grand; clean vacant lots; buffer the industrial areas with greenspace.



Maclear Shepard



Spruill's Catering - Neighborhood Business





## **invest in youth**

The vision of the Youth Subcommittee, shared with Health and Human Services and Education, is for a safe environment for youth to maximize their potential, and for programs that promote problem-solving, personal growth, self-esteem and confidence.

Nearly half of the residents of JeffVanderLou are under the age of 24. While organizations like Carver House, the Mike McMillan Youth Development Program, Solid Sports and the city's Gamble Center have, against many odds and over many years, provided recreation and committed staff people to support JeffVanderLou's youth, much more is needed. We will work with these organizations to strengthen and expand their programs and improve their facilities.

Additionally, it is clear that resources focused on critical needs, including juvenile crime prevention, alternative service, pregnancy prevention and improved work opportunities, are much needed and are being identified.

Young people and adults involved in the planning process reached the same conclusion--effective programs must collectively provide services that address the total needs of youth. Young people need a structured environment where children and teenagers feel safe from physical and psychological harm, have access to caring adults, age-appropriate programs and sup-

portive family resources. This holistic approach to youth issues is essential to the long-term health and well being of JeffVanderLou and the entire community.

The principles guiding youth programming are described in the Youth Development Model. The Youth Development Model, adopted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services after years of research and experience, states that to be effective, programs and services for youth must offer the following:

1. A sense of personal safety
2. Structure
3. A sense of belonging or membership
4. A sense of self-worth that is predicated on achievement and character
5. Mastery of skills
6. Access to learning opportunities beyond the classroom
7. Responsibility
8. Spirituality
9. Self-awareness
10. Support and guidance from caring adults



## invest in youth

- Our strategy includes:
- Neighborhood Youth Collaborative
  - Youth Leadership Development



Members of the Youth Subcommittee

### Neighborhood Youth Collaborative

As mentioned above, youth programs exist in and near the neighborhood, but their efforts, though remarkable, have not been coordinated with each other in ways that increase their resources or their reach. We will work with existing organizations to expand youth programs to all corners of the neighborhood and to apply for additional resources (foundation, city, state and federal grants) to add programs that support and use elements of the Youth Development Model.

Our young people will be involved as well, on a Youth Advisory Board and in other activities, so they have a voice in determining the programs and services that affect them.

### The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative in Action: Investing in Youth

**Parks and Playgrounds:** With the Danforth Foundation and the St. Louis Public Schools, we are seeking program support, volunteer resources and contributions for playground equipment and landscaping for existing parks and playgrounds. Fund-raising is underway, with work to begin by Summer 2001.

**Neighborhood Youth Collaborative:** An effort to organize existing youth services providers to create collaborative programs and opportunities for expanded funding and improved facilities is underway.





## invest in youth

### Youth Leadership Development

Work has already begun on an entirely "in-house" program through involving our young people and preparing them to lead and understand the value of community service. We have involved youth in the cleanup of our alleyways and working with our seniors on gardening projects, and we are beginning a community service project with Vashon High School seniors. In addition, young people will be engaged in lead-

training through local African-American and other mentoring, leadership training and service organizations. Through community service and leadership training, young people will gain an understanding of the important role they play in the future of our community. We hope to have a positive impact that will help prepare our young people to reach their full productive potential.

#### Details:

Invest in Youth	People at the Table		Immediate, Short, Intermediate, or Long Term Action
	JVL Residents/Staff	Proposed Partners	
Neighborhood Youth Collaborative	Staff Residents	Columbia CEC Carver CEC CAMCO Gamble Center City Parks & Recreation Mike McMillan Youth Center Carver House St. Louis Public Schools Churches	Immediate
Build collaborative	Staff		Immediate
Improve Gamble Center	Staff Program Manager	City of St. Louis State of Missouri	Short
Design collaborative programming	Collaborative Area youth	Business Community All Residents	Short
Youth Leadership Development Program	Program Manager	City Private Landscaping Companies Gateway to Greening CORO Foundation African-American mentoring and youth leadership development providers St. Louis Dept. of Human Services youth programs State of Missouri Local and neighborhood adults	Short
Identify youth	Partners		Short
Involve youth in planning	Partners		Short
First youth leadership class			Short



## **promote excellence in education**

A neighborhood with excellent public schools, and a strong partnership between schools and the community, will be a source of pride for existing residents and attract new residents to the neighborhood. We are committed to strategies that will restore the JeffVanderLou neighborhood's reputation of years past as a center of excellence in public education. Our strategy for education addresses the preschool years, K-12, and af-

ter-school, summer and weekend programs. The boundaries of the traditional school day must be expanded to enrich children's lives and provide support for them whenever they need it. Partnerships are the key to this approach: partnerships involving the public schools, the community, childcare providers and youth programs.

- Our strategy includes:**
- Preparing children to be ready to learn in school by providing excellent childcare and early education.
  - Providing a variety of educational, cultural and recreational opportunities for children after school, on weekends and during the summer.
  - The Vashon Education Compact.

### **Excellence in Child Care and Early Education**

The Education Subcommittee identified childcare and preschool education as critical needs if JeffVanderLou children are to succeed in school. The benefits of early social and educational interaction are proven: children develop early learning and social skills, develop friendships, become accustomed to structure and routine, and benefit from regular physical activity. We propose that infant childcare and preschool opportunities be enhanced.

Working with data from the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, the Initiative will assess neighborhood demand for infant childcare and preschool, and evaluate whether demand is greater than the existing ability to respond. We will work

with the Public Schools and day care organizations to increase slots at existing centers and/or create new centers, such as the one proposed for the JeffVanderLou campus.

We have existing resources to improve the quality of care in the neighborhood as well. The St. Louis Public Schools' program for in-service training of day care and preschool providers will be open to all centers in JeffVanderLou. Directors, staff, and aides will receive training tailored to the needs of our children, and emphasizing the goal of school readiness. We will also work with existing centers to ensure proper licensing and help them achieve accreditation if desired.





## **promote excellence in education**

We will also work with young parents by increasing participation of neighborhood families in the highly successful Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. The PAT program is nationally recognized and was developed

in Missouri. It works with parents in the home to develop parenting skills, improve parent-infant interaction, and connect parents to other resources in the community.

### **After-School, Weekend and Summer Opportunities**

The earlier section of this report, entitled Invest in Youth, describes our strategies to provide a wide variety of activities and opportunities for young people. We intend to leverage the resources of the St. Louis Public Schools as much as possible to serve the JeffVanderLou neighborhood. We are

already working with Carver and Columbia Schools' programs, and with the City's Department of Parks and Recreation, to create a partnership for coordinated youth programs in JeffVanderLou. Please refer to the Invest in Youth section for a complete description of this component.

### **The Vashon Education Compact**

Perhaps the most far-reaching and comprehensive effort to reach young people in JeffVanderLou is through the Vashon Education Compact. This effort, led by the Danforth Foundation and the St. Louis Public Schools, will work to improve student achievement, upgrade facilities, and provide new technology at eight public schools feeding into the new Vashon High School.

The Compact is modeled after the very successful work completed at Jefferson School, just east of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood in Murphy Park.

#### **The Vashon Education Compact goals are:**

1. Significantly increase student achievement on a variety of indicators at eight schools in or adjacent to the neighborhood (Banneker, Carver, Columbia,

Dunbar, Jackson, Blewett, Jefferson and Stevens), that feed into Vashon High School;

2. Identify, retain, and/or attract highly effective principals and outstanding teachers to live in the neighborhood and work in the schools, potentially with the creation of incentives paid for with private funds (e.g. housing and others) for professional staff;
3. Enhance the livability of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood by providing high quality, community oriented, public education.

The Compact has identified several strategies that will accomplish these goals. Private funding has already been secured for some new initiatives, and a major private fundrais-



## promote excellence in education

effort is underway to cover the entire cost of the following:

- Equip each school for an extended year school by renovating and upgrading school facilities, including air conditioning and computers.
- Wire each building to accommodate current and future technology.
- Establish professional development programs for improved teaching effectiveness. Use existing resources at each school and the Board of Education Professional Development Academy.
- Conduct local, regional and national searches to identify and recruit outstanding principals and teachers.
- Establish and maintain effective communication with neighborhood residents, students, parents, and the St. Louis Public Schools by building on the existing Advisory Councils at each school.
- Privately fund new incentives for principals and teachers to live and work in the JeffVanderLou community and teach at the neighborhood schools.

### Details:

Project	People at the Table		
	JVL Residents/Staff	Proposed Partners	
<b>Excellence in Education</b>			
Early Care and Education	Project Manager	SLPS Local and neighborhood day care providers Child Day Care Association United Way	
Neighborhood Assessment	Health and Human Services Committee		
Create slots in existing institutions	Project Manager	St. Louis Public Schools	Immediate
Feasibility/recruitment plan for new day care/early care as needed	Project Manager	Day Care providers	
Professional development plan for early care providers	St. Louis Public Schools	Day Care providers	Short
Parenting classes started	Agency TBD: e.g. Parents as Teachers		Intermediate
<b>After School/Weekend Summer Programs</b>			
See Youth Section of Report			
<b>Vashon Education Compact</b>	Project Manager	St. Louis Public Schools Danforth Foundation Other Funders	
Develop Compact Proposal and Project Timeline	Executive Director Project Manager Danforth Foundation		Immediate
Meet with SLPS Board of Education	Executive Director Project Manager Danforth Foundation		Immediate
Complete feasibility studies on first three schools	Vashon/JVL Initiative		Immediate-Short-Term
Wiring at some schools as part of e-rate program	SLPS		
Air conditioning installed at Columbia and Carver per SLPS plan	SLPS		
Develop active Advisory Boards at each school	SLPS Project Manager		Intermediate
Fund-raising efforts	Bob Koff, Danforth Foundation		Immediate-Short-Term





## **expand and coordinate health and human services**

The Health and Human Services Subcommittee built its vision of a JeffVanderLou neighborhood based on the strengths of family, faith and community. Many older residents on this subcommittee recalled the close-knit nature of the neigh-

borhood in earlier times. Our goal is to expand, improve and reorganize human services and resources in the neighborhood in order to improve the health and well-being of all people who live and work in our neighborhood.

### **Our strategy includes:**

- Health Care Services and Outreach
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Senior Citizen Center
- Computer-Based Human Services Network

### **Health Care Services and Outreach**

A full-time physician located at the CHIPS (Community Health In Partnership Services), health clinic would improve access to primary health care and prenatal care. CHIPS, located at Grand and North Market, is the only health care facility in or near the neighborhood. It has provided routine health screenings and other services for over 10 years.

The physician could provide and supervise family medicine, health screenings and immunizations for children and home healthcare for the elderly, and support the medical personnel at the new high school.

A physician could also help design and attract resources for a comprehensive wellness program, including exercise and nutrition, which would emphasize much needed preventive health care for all residents.

In addition, residents cited a need for a community health outreach worker. This outreach worker could also follow up on referrals, provide transportation when necessary, would check on the sick and shut-in, and provide health education to teen parents.



Organized into subcommittees focused on four areas of concern--Housing and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Health and Human Services and Education--to reflect the comprehensive nature of the Initiative, 75 to 100 residents met twice a month from January to July.

A team of respected local community development professionals led the subcommittees, supported by architects, planners, human services professionals, and economic development and education consultants.

Residents were the core members of the planning teams. They guided and informed the work of the consultants, developed goals and objectives in each of the four areas, and prioritized those goals for implementation.

From January to March, activity revolved around establishing a common base of knowledge about existing conditions in all of the areas of concern.

Key to the planning process were two intensive design workshops, or charrettes. Held in March 2000, after the existing conditions phase, and again in May of 2000,

these three-day sessions brought design consultants (architects, landscape designers, traffic engineers, and urban planners) together with residents, city officials, service providers and others to shape a physical design for the neighborhood.

The March charrette looked at parks, streets, housing, commercial areas and infrastructure in the context of the subcommittees' goals and objectives. It resulted in a set of neighborhood plan alternatives from among which residents selected the one that best met their needs and reflected their wishes.

With the involvement of residents, community leaders, the public sector and business owners, the design consultants refined the physical plan and worked with residents again in May to create a set of more detailed design ideas. It was during this design workshop that residents determined development priorities and their preferred design for the neighborhood. The Design Team Report, a counterpart to this document, is a detailed description of the physical development planning process and results.

## **The Report**

The remainder of this document presents the results of each of the subcommittees' efforts. It includes goals, objectives, priorities, strategies, partners and general timeframes for actions to improve the quality of neighborhood life. It also describes current work projects for major aspects of both social and physical development priority areas.







## **expand and coordinate health and human services**

### **Substance Abuse Treatment**

We are very concerned about substance abuse among young residents of JeffVanderLou. A substance abuse treatment and prevention program would help residents involved in and at risk for drug use by teaching skills and coping strategies,

building self-esteem, and providing training in personal discipline, goal-setting and problem-solving. An experienced agency with proven success in St. Louis should be recruited to provide services in JeffVanderLou.

### **Senior Citizen Center**

Many of our residents feel the neighborhood's senior citizens would benefit from a senior center. A place for gathering, information, activities and services would enhance their dignity, support their independence and encourage their involvement in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood. The center could be located within the proposed

Learning Campus, and be operated in conjunction with an adult care center--a facility to provide care to elderly residents who suffer from physical and mental infirmities, and respite to those who care for them.

### **A Health and Human Services Network for JeffVanderLou**

Residents have expressed concern about a variety of barriers to receiving services. We propose an innovative computer-based network to link service agencies together and make it easier for JVL residents to get access to the services they need.

Agencies would share information on resources and clients through an electronic network.

#### **Benefits:**

- Reduce the need for repeated provision of personal information.
- Better-coordinated services for residents interacting with multiple agencies.
- Clients get the services they need rather than just whatever service is offered by the agency whose door they enter.
- Identification of services that meet each resident's needs, including services with which they may not be familiar.
- A method to ensure that appointments are kept and services actually delivered.



## expand and coordinate health and human services

### The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative in Action: Coordinating Health and Human Services

**Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative Neighborhood Support Center:** An Initiative office, service provider offices, community meeting facilities and family resource center space will be established on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. This office is proposed to open in early to mid-2001.

**Integrated Services Network Pilot Program:** This central HHS strategy is designed to increase and simplify access to health and human services for JeffVanderLou residents. A grant application has been submitted to fund the pilot program, which will be run in cooperation with CHIPS. If the application is successful, this program could begin in 2001.

### Details:

Expand and Coordinate Health and Human Services	People at the Table		Immediate, Short, Intermediate, or Long Term Action
<i>Health Care Services and Outreach</i>	All Residents/Staff		
Raise funds for physician and outreach worker	Staff		Short
Establish positions in conjunction with CHIPS	CHIPS Foundation		Short
<i>Substance Abuse Treatment Center</i>			
Interview and select service provider	Staff		Short
<i>Senior Citizen Center</i>		Red Cross	
Work with senior housing and elder care services to establish program for residents		CHIPS State of Missouri	Intermediate
<i>Health and Human Services Network</i>	Technical Consultant Residents	Health and Human Services Providers	
Identify participants			Immediate
Define data collection and responsible parties			Short
Configure hardware and software			Intermediate
Purchase server and maintenance contract			Intermediate
Lease software			Intermediate
Implementation and Training			Intermediate





## **strategies to build physical capital**

### **celebrate our history: the foundation for physical and economic revitalization**

Residents identified two primary neighborhood assets upon which to base its physical and economic revival:

1. Its history and
2. Its location between downtown and midtown.

We propose a strategy to celebrate our history and revive the neighborhood commercial district that so many of our residents remember so fondly.

Our strategy includes:

- Establishing a thematic cultural district,
- Reviving the commercial area along Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, and
- Rehabilitating historic homes in the area around Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.



Plan concept: Frye Drug (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive at Glasgow)



## celebrate our history

### Thematic Cultural District

In addition to its historical significance, JeffVanderLou is currently home to many important cultural and historic institutions, and is close to several others: the Scott Joplin House, Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, Black World History Wax Museum, Portfolio Gallery, Black Repertory Theatre and the Urban League. An evaluation by noted historian and architect Everett Fly supports our goal to create a thematic cultural district in this area, with the potential for designation by the National Register of Historic Places.

We intend to make JeffVanderLou a tourist destination - local, regional, and national - centered on the history and culture of African-Americans. It is our hope to work with existing African-American arts and cultural organizations to create an African-American Cultural District that would provide an opportunity for joint marketing, fund-raising, advertising and exposure. The

### Revive MLK Commercial District

The thematic cultural district provides an excellent opportunity to leverage resources and create markets for existing and new businesses. Our focal point will be a revitalized Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive that serves as a source of pride for residents. We will pursue the following strategies over the next 12 to 18 months to strengthen and grow our business district in conjunction with the historic designation:

- Form new and/or strengthen existing neighborhood merchants' organizations so they can attract resources and play a

#### **The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative in Action: Celebrating our History**

**Missouri Historical Society Partnership:** We have secured the commitment of the Missouri Historical Society to provide staff and resources and to work with residents to begin to survey the historic assets of our neighborhood. We have applied for a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to help fund this partnership. If the grant is successful, work could begin in January 2001.

idea has been introduced and further discussions are currently underway.

Preliminary research on the history of the area will begin in the fall of 2000. Formal application for the designation is targeted for late 2001-early 2002.

leadership role in the life of the community.

- Establish design standards and criteria for storefronts, signage, façade treatments, zoning and other building use and design issues.
- Identify and provide access to funding and programs for infrastructure improvements, neighborhood beautification and other enhancements in support of business development and growth.





## celebrate our history

- Pursue tax credit allocation for building improvements for new and existing business owners.

### Rehabilitate Historic Houses

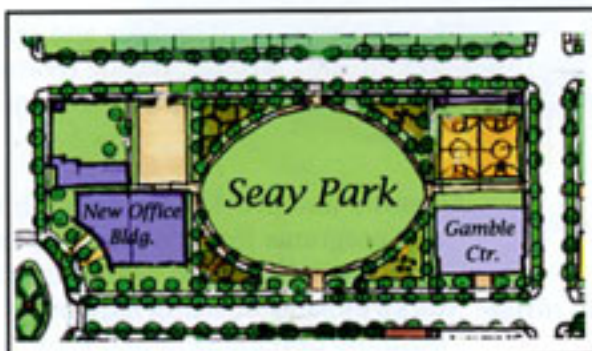
In the area around Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, many historic homes have fallen into disrepair over the years. We propose to assist existing homeowners in the renovation and rehabilitation of their homes, and will pursue financial incentives for new homeowners to renovate and occupy homes that are currently vacant but salvageable.

The housing rehabilitation strategy is a long-term project. We anticipate beginning a housing rehabilitation loan program for existing homeowners by mid-2001, and facilitating an infill housing development program by late 2001.

#### Programs and incentives that relate to historic rehabilitation:

- Home improvement loan program for bank-qualified homeowners.
- Grant/soft second mortgage program for elderly homeowners.
- Purchase significant vacant homes; combine with rehab/sale program for new homeowners.
- Design programs to assist residents to become bank-qualified for improvement loans.
- Where vacant lots exist or buildings cannot be rehabbed, infill with new construction consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood.

## create a community service and learning campus



Community Service Campus

The creation of a Community Service and Learning Campus meets many of our key goals. We need space to provide programs and services within the neighborhood; we can create an anchor for continued development of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive; and we can meet anticipated needs of the private sector for office and retail space. The campus will bring together non-profit and private sector services for residents, employees and owners of local businesses



## **community service and learning campus**

and visitors to the neighborhood. It may tie directly to the Manchester Craftsman's Guild/Bidwell Training Center facility described earlier in this report.

The campus would be located on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, and encompass an area of about eight to ten acres. The site plan would incorporate significant historic buildings into the design, and would also include renovation of the Gamble Center for continued use as a youth center.

### **Neighborhood Center**

The Community Service and Learning Campus would provide space for many of the programs described in this report: neighborhood leadership training, housing programs and counseling, and financial lit-

Our strategy includes:

- Create space for neighborhood programs and services, neighborhood leadership development, and a home for non-profit organizations.
- Provide space for 24-hour child care and adult day care programs.
- Provide market-rate rental space for retail, financial services, and office uses.

eracy, to name a few. This campus would also provide space for the offices of the nonprofit Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative and the neighborhood association.

### **24-Hour Child Care and Adult Day Care**

During the planning process we identified 24-hour childcare as a need for the community. Many entry-level jobs are only available on second, third or "swing" shifts. Working parents need quality childcare around the clock in order to enter the workforce knowing their children are well cared for.

In the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, we also discussed the need for companionship for our senior citizens, and seniors' desire to become more involved in the community. Childcare and adult day care, provided on the Campus, will meet those needs.

An experienced 24-hour childcare operator has expressed an interest in leasing space within the JeffVanderLou campus, and this type of childcare meets the needs of families working non-traditional hours.

We are working with the Red Cross' division of elderly services on a plan to offer adult day care for seniors at the campus. We believe the interaction between young and old on the campus will benefit both, and there is synergy in combining care at the same location.





## community service and learning campus

### Market Rate Rental Space

We believe the potential exists to attract private sector office and retail uses to the campus. The Initiative office has already received inquiries regarding available space in the neighborhood. The retail market study completed during the planning process concluded, "The addition of supportable new retail space can be an effective part of the overall plan to revitalize the

JeffVanderLou neighborhood." The study pointed to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive as a good location for new retail businesses.

Preliminary architectural design and site planning for the campus has begun. We will begin to secure site control, complete design, solicit tenants and apply for financing by fall 2001.

### Details:

Community Service and Learning Campus	People at the Table		Immediate, Short, Intermediate, or Long Term Action
Neighborhood Center	JVI, Residents/Staff	Proposed Partners	Immediate
	Project Manager	Strickland	
	Residents	LRA	
		Minority builder and/or contractor(s)	
		Financial Institutions	
		Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC)	
		St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE)	
		Empowerment Zone	
		State Department of Economic Development	
Preliminary site plan	David Mason and Associates		Immediate
Obtain temporary space	Project Manager		Immediate
Site acquisition	City		Short
Select architect	Executive Director		Short
Schematic design	Architect		Intermediate
Negotiate construction joint venture	Executive Director		Intermediate
Leasing commitments	Project Manager		Intermediate
Financing commitments	Project Manager		
Break ground			
Child Care and Adult Day Care	Family Development Staff	Childcare and Adult Day Care Operators	
	Residents	American Red Cross	
		State Department of Aging	
		St. Louis Area Agency on Aging	
Determine detailed objectives and neighborhood needs	Family Development Staff	St. Louis Public Library	
Negotiate contracts	Executive Director		
Begin operation in campus	Operators		
Market Rate Rental Space	Project Manager	Financial Institutions	
	Residents	City	
		Leasing Broker	
	Executive Director		
	Leasing Broker		
Prepare marketing material	Project Manager, Leasing Broker		
Begin lease negotiations	Project Manager, Leasing Broker		
Select tenants	Executive Director		



## **build and preserve housing**

Our vision for the JeffVanderLou neighborhood includes streets revitalized with new and rehabilitated houses; development that preserves the area's rich architectural history; housing that meets the needs of residents of all ages, income levels and family types; and attractive neighborhood amenities and services.

Our neighborhood faces many challenges in the housing arena: hundreds of vacant buildings and vacant lots scattered throughout the neighborhood; streets and alleys that are littered and in need of repair; a very

low homeownership rate of about 30 percent; and hundreds of privately-owned rental units in severe need of repair, remodeling and improved management.

We identified projects that would overcome our challenges and achieve our vision. Our housing strategies address the need to strengthen the physical character of the neighborhood (buildings, streets, parks and commercial areas), and the need for financial resources and programs to support existing and potential new residents.

- Our strategy includes:**
- Rehabilitate historic homes.
  - Build new housing that is high quality, affordable and in character with the neighborhood.
  - Provide financial resources and programs that support residents in every housing category.

### **Rehabilitate Historic Homes**

As described earlier in the Thematic Cultural District strategy there are many historic homes in the area north of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. In this area, and on other blocks with a majority of existing historic houses, rehabilitation of existing homes will be combined with infill housing with historic character.

### **Build New Housing**

We believe strongly that new infill housing should be built in areas of the neighborhood with many vacant lots. We emphasize

### **The housing strategy meets the following Subcommittee goals and objectives:**

**Housing and Infrastructure:** Rehab homes worth saving.  
Increase the number of homeowners; build for-sale affordable housing.  
Improve neighborhood rental housing.

that any new construction must meet design standards as stated in the Design Team Report. It must be designed to fit into





## **build and preserve housing**

the neighborhood's historic character, and must provide home ownership opportunities for families in a range of income levels.

The area of the neighborhood we identified as having the greatest opportunity for

new construction is located northwest of Vashon High School. There are many adjoining vacant lots in this area, most of them owned by the City's Land Reutilization Authority.

### **Provide Financial Resources and Programs**

Financial resources, programs and new approaches must support our goals for physical revitalization if we are to be successful. The proposals we have developed will provide that support by drawing on the

wealth of housing programs and financing tools that exist in St. Louis, and by introducing fresh approaches that have proven their success in other St. Louis neighborhoods and other cities.

#### **Following are the key points in each program area:**

**Programs for Existing Homeowners:** Use and supplement existing City funds and private financing for home improvement loans and grants; homeowner counseling program will help homeowners get the right insurance for their situation and make sure that title issues do not prevent them from obtaining financing; enlist volunteers to assist our elderly and low-income homeowners in home repair and landscaping; and, over time, create strong homeowner associations on all blocks in JVL.

**Assistance to Renters:** Well-maintained, well-managed rental units need to be available for families and individuals. Programs for renters can include rental assistance for low-income families, a centralized apartment database to make finding a rental unit an easier task; a security deposit loan program to help working families afford quality apartments; training for tenants in their rights and responsibilities as renters; and an organization of tenants and landlords to improve communication and ensure that management practices meet the needs of both tenants and landlords.

**Programs for New Homebuyers:** Create assistance for all types of housing and all types of residents. Homebuyer counseling, training and financing will provide incentives for people to buy in JVL and ensure that homeownership will be available for a wide range of income levels. Public and private resources already exist in St. Louis and must be brought to JVL.

Our early focus will be on programs to 1) help existing residents rehabilitate and improve their homes; and 2) facilitate homebuyer training courses for residents and non-residents in order to enable them to chase homes in JeffVanderLou. These programs will begin in 2000; development and rehabilitation programs are long-term strategies: 18 to 24 months out.





## build and preserve housing

### The Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative in Action: Assisting Homeowners

**Christmas in April:** If our neighborhood is chosen, this volunteer interior and exterior home repair program for low-income, elderly and disabled homeowners will be held in April 2001. Neighborhood residents collected applications door-to-door in August and September 2000.

**Homeowner Services and Support:** We are developing a plan and gathering resources for interior and exterior home improvements. We will use existing City resources and seek new funding, and select an experienced non-profit program administrator for the program by Spring 2001.

**Home Purchase and Rehabilitation Loan Programs:** We are working with local non-profit groups and lenders to develop loan and grant resources for new and existing homeowners. The nonprofits have demonstrated success in other City neighborhoods. The program is anticipated to begin in mid-2001.

#### Details:

Project	People at the Table		Immediate, Short, Intermediate, or Long Term Action
<b><i>Build and Preserve Housing</i></b>	JVL Residents/Staff	Proposed Partners	
<i>Rehabilitate Historic Homes</i>	Project Manager Residents	City Housing Program Manager Private Developer Financial Institution	
Design loan and grant programs	Housing Program Manager		Immediate
Design rehab/sale program	Housing Program Manager		Short
Infill "historic" construction	Development team		Intermediate
<b><i>Build New Housing</i></b>	Project Manager Residents	City Housing Program Manager Minority Developer(s) and Contractor(s) Financial Institution Regional Housing and Community Development Association	
Finalize design standards for new construction	Residents Technical consultant		Short-Intermediate
Acquire land for large-scale development	Project Manager		
Issue Request for Proposal for developers	Project Manager		
Break ground on first phase	Development Team		
<b><i>Provide Resources and Programs</i></b>	Project Manager	City Housing Program Manager Financial Institution Regional Housing and Community Development Association Neighborhood Housing Services Urban League Other non-profit organizations	Short
Issue Request for Proposal for housing counseling programs	Project Manager		Short
Begin fundraising for programs	Grant writing team		Short
Organize volunteer rehab programs	Staff		Short





## Summary

Each subcommittee presented its goals and priorities to the full planning committee on May 11, 2000. The full committee then voted on the goals of each subcommittee to establish implementation priorities

for each. The top three goals for each subcommittee are listed below. The full subcommittee areas of concern, goals, and objectives are presented following this summary

### • Housing and Infrastructure

1. Improve neighborhood rental housing.
2. Improve neighborhood parks, playgrounds and community buildings.
3. Improve neighborhood retail, industrial and commercial buildings to improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood.

### • Economic Development

1. Workforce Preparation: Increase the level of job readiness and skills among neighborhood residents.
2. Foster business development and job creation in the neighborhood to provide goods and services and local jobs for residents.
3. Promote individual and family wealth creation.

### • Education

1. Raise the level of student achievement in JeffVanderLou schools to exceed national standards.
2. Renovate school buildings and grounds to promote learning, recreation and safety.
3. Build a technology infrastructure within each school to enhance learning, communications and information management.

### • Health and Human Services

1. Reduce street crime—especially drug trafficking.
2. Reduce isolation of senior citizens by organizing group activities within the neighborhood.
3. Tie: Improve youth development by providing access to positive recreational, cultural and arts opportunities. Improve the quality of life in the neighborhood by organizing block-level programs, events and activities.

**Note:** Reports have been condensed to conserve space. Copies of the full tables are available from the Initiative office.

Initiative staff, residents, local service providers and neighborhood businesses will work together to develop comprehensive implementation plans for each of the subcommittees' goals, objectives and priorities.

These plans and subsequent implementation will be dependent on the opportunities, partners and resources that become available over time.



## Housing and Infrastructure Subcommittee

The Housing and Infrastructure Subcommittee was given the following charge in forming a plan for the JVL neighborhood:

- Plan for and secure attractive and affordable, rental and owner-occupied, mixed-income housing.
- Increase opportunities for residents to own their own homes.
- Plan for a safe and welcoming neighborhood.
- Plan for neighborhood amenities such as parks to ensure that programs are beneficial to residents.

**Subcommittee Leadership:** Charles Bryson, Chair and Chris Krehmeyer, Vice-Chair provided subcommittee leadership. (Mr. Krehmeyer took on the role as chair in March, following Mr. Bryson's resignation due to other commitments).

Technical support and guidance were provided by: Urban Design Associates of Pittsburgh; David Mason & Associates of St. Louis; Michael Willis Architects of San Francisco; and LaQuatra Bonci Associates of Pittsburgh. Economic analysis of the housing market was provided by AREA, Inc. of Chicago led by principal Maxine Mitchell.



**Dr. Robert Koff of the Danforth Foundation and Co-chair Marlene Davis, President of the St. Louis Board of Education and Subcommittee Chair**

Subcommittee members began their work by exploring hopes and dreams for the neighborhood. They then identified the challenges that must be addressed in order to make those hopes and dreams real.

Primary among the housing challenges in the neighborhood is the existence of more than 600 low-income housing units. Developed in the mid-1970s and early 1980s, these JeffVanderLou housing units are currently under the management of three different entities. Many are in disrepair and nearly half are vacant. The physical design of the newer units is incompatible with the nature of the remaining historic housing in the neighborhood. Many units lack front or back porches, yards and secure entrances--the elements that make for family and neighborhood-friendly housing.

The large number and generally poor condition of the low-income housing units have created tension between homeowners and tenants and the housing managers. Creation of a healthy and successful residential neighborhood depends on confronting these tensions and creating ways to successfully integrate affordable, attractive and compatible low-and moderate-income housing with existing and new single-family homes.

We realize that to be successful, the neighborhood must create a broad range of





housing opportunities for people across all income levels. Single-family home production for moderate to high-income residents is essential. Renovation and improved, unified management of the JeffVanderLou rental housing units is also of the highest importance.

Finally, it is essential that housing development take place at a scale that will make a significant impact on the neighborhood.

Housing development must be aimed at recreating a sense of security, beauty and community to truly succeed.

Statement of Concern	Goals	Objectives
The neighborhood has a large number of blighted properties and lots, and the streets and alleys are littered and in bad repair.	Eliminate blighted properties and improve the neighborhood environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove derelict houses that cannot be rehabbed and clean lots.</li> <li>2. Rehab homes worth saving.</li> <li>3. Improve streets and alleys.</li> <li>4. Improve neighborhood maintenance.</li> </ol>
There are not enough homeowners in the neighborhood.	Increase the number of homeowners.	Build for-sale affordable housing.
Some neighborhood rental housing is perceived to be a problem.	Improve neighborhood rental housing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repair run-down rental housing/create new, high-quality rental buildings.</li> <li>2. Improve tenant screening/landlord cooperation.</li> </ol>
Many neighborhood parks and community buildings are in poor condition.	Improve neighborhood parks, playgrounds and community buildings.	Repair park landscaping and repair or install benches and playground equipment.
Many neighborhood retail, commercial and industrial buildings are in need of repair, and several retail/commercial streets are in need of infill development.	Improve neighborhood retail, industrial and commercial buildings.	Repair run-down retail, commercial and industrial buildings.

## Economic Development Subcommittee

The Economic Development Subcommittee worked with the following charge to its members:

The Subcommittee was led by Chair, Byron Winton, President of Civic Ventures, Inc., a minority-owned and focused venture capital firm, and Vice-Chair, Yvonne Sparks Strauther (Ms. Strauther was formerly Vice President, Community Development Banking, Bank of America, and the Executive Director of the Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative ). Technical assistance was provided by AREA, Inc. of Chicago. Annette Coleman of David Mason & Associates provided design assistance.

Create opportunities to stimulate the long-term economic health of the entire area, through increased opportunities for work, business development and entrepreneurship.

First, the subcommittee identified the neighborhood's strongest assets that could be used as a base to create an economic development strategy. We concluded that



our location and history are key factors in rebuilding the neighborhood's economy. These elements are at the center of the physical economic development strategy that includes the revitalization of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. drive as a retail, arts, entertainment and cultural district. The goal of this strategy is to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in the arts, entertainment and tourism industries.

Among the main challenges to our economic revitalization are: an unemployment rate nearly three times the overall rate for the City; low educational attainment; few local businesses to employ residents; lack of adequate transportation to provide access to jobs outside the neighborhood; and inadequate vocational education and job readiness training resources for the vast majority of residents, many of whom are ill-pre-

pared for the workforce.

Subcommittee members also recognized the need for the community to be prepared technologically. Residents of all ages, along with existing businesses, lack knowledge about and access to computer technology. We realize that if we are to succeed economically we must invest time and resources in expanding access to technology in the neighborhood.

Another central issue is residents' lack of financial literacy and understanding of the importance of asset accumulation and wealth-building. Resources to address these challenges are necessary to ensure that existing JeffVanderLou residents may participate in the opportunities that will come with redevelopment.

Statement of Concern	Goals	Objectives
The area lacks businesses to service the area and businesses that provide jobs to area residents.	Foster business development and job creation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain and support existing businesses located in JeffVanderLou.</li> <li>2. Attract new businesses to JeffVanderLou.</li> <li>3. Promote development of new businesses and entrepreneurs from within the community.</li> <li>4. Ensure that some of the new businesses are high-tech companies that provide high-tech employment and training opportunities for residents.</li> <li>5. Create a "one-stop" business center that provides comprehensive information about the unique business and quality-of-life advantages of the neighborhood for companies and individuals interested in moving to JeffVanderLou.</li> </ol>
Families and individuals lack understanding of money and finance and are not equipped to take advantage of opportunities that can improve their individual and family financial situations and	Promote individual and family wealth creation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote basic financial literacy for residents of all ages.</li> <li>2. Promote improved home and family economic management.</li> <li>3. Promote financial planning and investment.</li> </ol>
<b>Futures.</b> Residents are not equipped to take advantage of job opportunities. They lack basic education and work skills.	Workforce preparation. Increase the level of job readiness and skills among neighborhood residents.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the local labor market and opportunities so that we can attract a mix of job opportunities for those with and without high levels of education.</li> <li>2. Work together with education, training and work experience programs to provide opportunities for residents to acquire basic education and skills needed for work.</li> <li>3. Create incentives and opportunities for businesses to provide internships and work experience opportunities for residents to improve their job readiness skills.</li> </ol>





## Health and Human Services Subcommittee

The Health and Human Services Subcommittee was given the following charge:

- Ensure the availability of convenient quality social and other services for all people, including the elderly, poor, children and youth, single parents and substance abusers.
- Ensure convenient accessible health care for area residents.

The subcommittee explored the challenges and threats to the health and quality of life of JeffVanderLou residents. Residents were trained and worked together with the consultants to conduct surveys of both JeffVanderLou residents and service providers that serve the neighborhood. Sixty-eight providers were identified as serving neighborhood residents but only six are actually located in the area. **The key findings of the residents' survey include:**

- JeffVanderLou residents lack access to essential services: primary health care, job training and placement, substance abuse prevention and treatment, youth development, and resources for the elderly.
- Services in priority areas are not available within the neighborhood, and residents lack transportation to get to services avail-

able outside the neighborhood. Residents cannot take advantage of those services that are outside the boundaries of JeffVanderLou.

- Residents are not aware of existing services either inside or outside the neighborhood.
- Residents believe that some of the services available to them are of poor quality.
- In addition to lack of access, residents and professionals reported many barriers that keep residents from obtaining the services they need.
- In addition to inadequate services, residents are very concerned about several quality of life issues. Foremost among these is street crime, including the sale of illegal drugs.

**Subcommittee Leadership:** The Subcommittee was led by Chair Frederick Robinson, MSW of the National Benevolent Association (NBA) and Vice-Chair Judy Bentley Executive Director of Community Health in Partnership (CHIPS). Technical assistance was provided by Bryan Samuels of Grassroots Planning & Consulting, a firm specializing in the human service needs of inner-city neighborhoods. Michael Killeen of David Mason & Associates provided design assistance. University of Missouri-Columbia Masters of Social Work student Orvin T. Kimbrough, who since graduation has continued his work with the Initiative, provided additional staff support.



- Senior residents have a heightened need for certain types of services, but they are isolated and do not act as a group to ensure that their needs are met.
- Only five percent of residents said that senior citizens' groups are an active presence in the neighborhood. Seniors feel disenfranchised.
- Meanwhile, agency professionals inside and outside the boundaries of JVL are not fully aware of one another's offerings. The block-level programs, events and activities that directly affect the quality of life for all residents of the neighborhood are not present.

The results of the survey led to our identification of five primary areas of concern. Those concerns are listed below, along with goals and objectives designed to address them.

Statement of Concern	Goals	Objectives
Unemployment in the neighborhood is too high.	Increase employment of residents.	Expand services and improve access to job training and employment assistance.
The physical health of residents is below an acceptable standard.	Improve physical health of residents.	Expand services and improve access to primary health care and prenatal care.
Too many residents are affected by substance abuse.	Reduce alcoholism and drug abuse.	Expand services and improve access to substance abuse treatment.
Senior citizens are isolated.	Reduce the isolation of senior citizens.	Organize group activities for senior citizens in the neighborhood and provide a means for them to engage in neighborhood activity.
Youth need more positive activities and role models.	Improve youth development.	Expand services and improve access to positive recreational, cultural and arts opportunities.

## Education Subcommittee

**Subcommittee Leadership:** Chair, Marlene Davis, President of the St. Louis Board of Education, and Vice-Chair Dr. James Dixon First Baptist Church in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood, led the subcommittee (Ms. Davis became a Co-Chair of the Initiative in March.) Both individuals brought their extensive experience in the public school system to the subcommittee. Technical assistance was provided by staff from McCormack Baron & Associates: Lisa Angstreich and George Myers. David Mason of David Mason & Associates provided design assistance.

The Education Subcommittee worked with the following charge:

- Ensure excellence in preschool through Grade 12 education for all students who reside in the neighborhood and/or attend a school within the neighborhood.
- Plan for and provide safe places for children after school, on weekends and during the summer months.





- Provide opportunities for lifelong learning. Education was a key concern of all of the committees. If we wish to bring residents back to the neighborhood, it is essential that the neighborhood provide safe, effective educational opportunities for their children and grandchildren. The success of the entire revitalization effort is largely dependent upon success in this effort.

The Education Subcommittee took a comprehensive approach to its charge and worked directly with representatives of the Board of Education to explore the many challenges in this area. St. Louis Public Schools Superintendent, Cleveland Hammonds, provided direct input to the subcommittee's work.

Many of the areas of concern and the associated goals and objectives created by

the committee address issues that are the direct responsibility of the St. Louis Public Schools. Those issues that deal with school administration, faculty, curriculum and funding will be addressed by a companion initiative called the Vashon Education Compact. This partnership between the St. Louis Public Schools, the Danforth Foundation and others will work directly with the Superintendent and Board of Education to pursue those goals and objectives.

The education concerns that can be directly addressed by the Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative are those that focus on educational issues beyond the physical school building. Work will focus on early childhood and after-school programs, youth development, life-long learning and access to technology.



Co-chair, Marlene Davis, President, Board of Education and Theresa Rogers, Instructional Coordinator, Columbia CEC.





## subcommittee reports

Statement of Concern	Goals	Objectives
The student achievement levels in the schools of the JVL neighborhood are low. It is imperative to ensure that the classroom conditions and teaching practices of the schools are optimal for high student achievement.	Raise student achievement to exceed district, state and national standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organize the schools for success.</li> <li>2. Support teachers in the implementation of lesson plans and units to achieve curriculum goals.</li> <li>3. All staff members and students have access to the resources needed to implement the curriculum of the school effectively.</li> <li>4. All students are reading on grade level.</li> <li>5. Implement a systematic assessment and review of student outcomes.</li> </ol>
Each public school in the JVL neighborhood must have an outstanding principal who is supported and/or hired because of his/her expertise in curriculum, instruction, management and leadership.	Support the SLPS's retention and recruitment of outstanding principals to ensure high-quality leadership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist the SLPS in developing management and community engagement skills for principals committed to providing a quality learning environment.</li> <li>2. Continue professional development and support program for principals.</li> </ol>
The school buildings in the JVL neighborhood, with the exception of the new Vashon High School, are in need of renovation. School buildings must be in excellent condition, be handicapped accessible and have air-conditioning to support a year-round learning environment.	Renovate school buildings and grounds to promote learning, recreation and safety.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine current condition of school buildings and create work scope of repairs and renovations.</li> <li>2. Create outdoor areas that promote recreation, safety and an improved look for the schools.</li> <li>3. Create indoor spaces that enhance instruction and learning.</li> </ol>
The schools within the JVL have inadequate technology resources and access to technology varies widely from school to school.	Build a technology infrastructure within each school to enhance learning, communication and information management.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install high-speed networking to each school.</li> <li>2. Equip each school with modern computers and high-quality educational software.</li> </ol>
Buildings must have the network environment, the computer hardware and software, and the staff to support a 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning environment.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Assure the integration of the technology into the teaching and learning environment by providing supportive staff and teacher training.</li> </ol>
Each school in the JVL neighborhood must have outstanding teachers and staff who are committed to providing a quality learning environment.	Support the SLPS's retention and recruitment of talented, dedicated, innovative and well-prepared teachers and staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the SLPS in assessing the quality of teaching and developing teachers committed to providing students a quality learning experience.</li> <li>2. Develop and implement professional development opportunities that lead to improved instruction, technology integration and national board certification.</li> </ol>
The schools in the JVL neighborhood need to foster a successful partnership with parents, neighborhood residents and community institutions.	Foster community and parental involvement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home.</li> <li>2. Improve communication/interaction between the schools and the community.</li> <li>3. Create family-school-community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement.</li> <li>4. Implement shared governance at each school.</li> </ol>





## other participants

Catrina Ackles  
Stephen Acree  
Donna Adams  
Wendell Allmon  
William Amos  
Sheila Archibald  
Mr. Armstrong  
Kwanghyam Bael  
James Bailey  
Peter Bailey  
Marvin Baldwin, Jr.  
Thomas Barmlett  
Annie M. Bates  
Marvin Batey  
Bill Becker  
Larnell Beece  
Josh Beeks  
Ka'Cher Bell  
Bobby Bennifield  
Peter Benoist  
Chris Bibbs  
Hollivan Billups  
Fred Bonci  
Marsha Bonds  
Marvin Bostic  
Harold Brewster  
Lois Brice  
Louise Brice  
Joyce Brooks  
Elijah Browing  
Alfreda Brown  
Georgia Brown-Moore  
Jeanette Brown  
Zena Brown  
Joy Burns  
Robert Burns  
Annette Y. Carter  
Ernest Carter  
Bonita Cauley  
Delores Cauley  
Denise Cauley  
Londy Cauley  
Paralee Cauley  
Christy Cavataio  
Annie Chambers  
Kevin Chambers  
Jeffrey Chandler  
Eddie Chatman  
Cicero Clark  
Gary Clark  
Juan Clark  
Willie Clay  
Jill Claybow  
Glover Cody, Jr.  
Jerline Coffman  
Nathanial Cole

Sarah Comstock  
Anita Cullins  
Charles Cummings  
Rev. Carl E. Cunningham  
Harold Cushshon  
Lt. Dampier  
James Davie  
Larry Davis  
Lazrus Davis  
William Davis  
James Dickerson  
Candace Dickson  
Michelle Dixon  
Kimberly Denton  
Mary Domahidy  
Alice Dominick  
Bakari Dorsey  
Ruby Dotson  
Almeda Duncan  
Herbert Edwards  
Loretta Easter  
Doug Finer  
Paula Foster  
Robert Freedman  
Angela Gahan  
Mary Garner  
Laura Gilbert  
William Gist  
Patrick Glennon  
Joan Glover  
Luvenia Goodwin  
Louis Gray  
Tonia T. Green  
Shirley Gregory  
Karl Gryce  
Delaphine Hampton  
Carole Hancock  
Dave Hancock  
Robert Hardy III  
Dorothy Harper  
Daniel Harper  
April Harris  
Fred L. Harris  
Lillie Harris  
Preston Harris  
Walter Harris  
Lasie Lu Jackson  
Brandon Johnson  
Mary "One" Johnson  
Harriett Jones  
Merce Jones  
Y.T. Jones  
Susan Katzman  
Chris Kiely  
Polly Kinstone  
Lester Knuckles

Robert Koff  
Roman Kordal  
Stacy Kraft  
Diane Lambert  
Tara Lambert  
Mike Lapusan  
Tammie Latimore  
Maxine Lax  
Willie Lee  
Lt. Larry Lee  
Howard LeRight  
Eula Mae Lewis  
Dorothy Ludgood  
Lois Lumpkin  
Sheronica Lyles  
John P. Mahoney  
Laura Mannes  
Pamela Mark  
David Marks  
Leonard Marshon  
Marybeth McBryan  
Tina McClure  
Emma McCoy  
Monroe McDonald  
Shirley McGhee  
Lauran McGill  
Florence McKinley  
Josie McLemore  
Harriett McNairy  
Cathy McNeal  
David McPherson  
Earl McWilliams  
Robin McWilliams  
Anita Miller  
Edward Mitchell  
Rev. Linda Mitchell  
Castidel Moore  
Sandy Moushey  
William Moushey  
Nadie Mozee  
Dayton Mudd  
Eric Mumford  
Uma Murgan  
James Murphy  
Charlene Murphy  
Maurice Murphy  
Maurice Murray  
Subira Murshid  
Everette Nance  
Mary Nichols  
Peggy O'Neal  
Dawn Parker  
Carla Pearson  
Gilbert Perry  
Jeannette Perry  
Julie Peterson

Brian Phillips  
Roy Piercece  
Steve Pollohan  
Robert Powell  
Sherry Prater  
Hazel Prete  
William Purdy  
Louise Purty  
Hazel Purty  
Sgt. Courtland Rainey  
Alma Reece  
Charlotte Reed  
Darryl Reed  
Jenny Reily  
Sandra Rhodes  
Stephanie Riven  
Charles Roberson  
Stacy Roberson  
Eric Robinson  
Raymond Robinson  
Robert Robinson  
Vera Robinson  
Hudson Rogers  
David Rosenberg  
Baron Ross  
Robert Ruson  
Fredia Russell  
Yvonne Saunders  
Ethel Sayles  
Anne Schwetye  
Harriet Scott  
Lula Mae Scott  
Reginald Scott  
Roy Scott  
Jamileh Shabazz  
Myrtle Shelton  
Yvonne Shenders  
Frank Simmons  
Mike Singleton  
Bonzella Smith  
Finus Smith  
Joe Smith  
Vernon Smith  
R. Diane Spain  
Marjorie Spears  
Brenda Stalin  
Irma Stallings  
L.A. Stamps  
Edna Standford  
Belinda Starks  
Julia Steele  
Donisha Stevenson  
PO Matthew Stoehner  
Vera Strong  
Gee Stuart  
Alfreda Summers

Ann Suppe  
Allan Swan  
Arnold Taylor  
Betty Taylor  
Derek Taylor  
Amina Terry  
Barbara Thomas  
Cameron Thomas  
Jeremiah Thomas  
Jerrikua Thomas  
Larry Thomas  
Duane Thompson  
Marvin Thompson  
Mark Thurmond  
Margaret Toms  
Mae Travis  
John Tyler  
Gloria Wallace  
Bessie Walls  
Darryl Walters  
Samuel Ware  
Adie Warren  
Ethel Warren  
Hubert Washington  
Juan Wells  
Bennie Whalen  
Richard Wile  
Bobbie Williams  
Cassandra Williams  
LaWanda Williams  
Holly Williams  
Mary Williams  
Michael Williams  
Robbie Williams  
Robert Williams  
Thirplis Williams  
Brenda Williamson  
Elaine Williford  
Sheronica Willis  
Nakiah Wilson  
Zach Wilson  
J. Winkler  
Florence Winston  
Moon-Hyok Yang  
Anita Young  
Curtis Young  
Mary Young  
Kris Zapalac  
Derek Zsaretti

## Existing Conditions